

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 230342
ORIGIN ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OC-06 CCO-00 /022 R

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R 120142Z SEP 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 230342

FOLLOWING REPEAT BONN 16180 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BUENOS AIRES
SANTIAGO LONDON PARIS DATED SEP 05:

QTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 16180

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, GW, CI, AR

SUBJECT: REPORT OF ARGENTINIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS ON
CHILEAN BORDER

1. THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAS ASKED IF WE CAN CONFIRM A
REPORT FROM THE FRG EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES OF
ARGENTINE TROOP MOVEMENTS ON THE BORDER WITH CHILE.

2. THE FOREIGN OFFICE DIRECTOR OF LATIN AMERICAN
AFFAIRS, HOFF, CONTACTED US TODAY REGARDING A REPORT
FROM THE FRG DEFENSE ATTACHE IN BUENOS AIRES CONCERNING
ARGENTINE TROOP MOVEMENTS ON THE CHILEAN BORDER. THE
REPORT, WHICH HOFF SAID WAS ALARMING BUT UNCONFIRMED
BY OTHER SOURCES, CONTAINED INDICATIONS THAT ARGENTINA
MIGHT BE PLANNING MILITARY ACTION AGAINST CHILE. THE
FOREIGN OFFICE ANALYSIS AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, WAS
THAT THE REPORTED TROOP MOVEMENTS WERE A PRESSURE TACTIC
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DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE CHILEAN CONCESSIONS IN THE BEAGLE
CANAL DISPUTE.

3. HOFF SAID THE REPORT CITED THE MOVEMENT OF
ARGENTINE BORDER TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT UP TO THE
CHILEAN BORDER. THE BORDER TROOPS WERE SAID TO BE
"READY FOR ACTION." THE REPORT, WHICH WAS DATED

AUGUST 29, ASSERTS THAT THE TRAINING PERIOD FOR ARGENTINE BORDER FORCES HAS BEEN CUT SHORT AND TRAINEES MOVED TO THE BORDER. THE DEFENSE ATTACHE ALSO REPORTED THAT THE MILITARY ACADEMY IN BUENOS AIRES HAD CEASED COURSES FOR FOREIGN MILITARY OFFICES AND THAT THE ARGENTINE INSTRUCTORS WERE INSTEAD TAKING PART IN "INTENSIVE GENSTAFF PLANNING." SUPPOSEDLY, THIS CONSISTS OF PREPARING PLANS FOR A THREE-PRONGED ATTACK AGAINST CHILE.

4. HOFF SAID THE FRG DEFENSE MINISTRY TAKES THE DEFENSE ATTACHE'S REPORT VERY SERIOUSLY. THE FOREIGN OFFICE, ON THE OTHER HAND, DOUBTS ARGENTIA IS PLANNING AN ATTACK ON CHILE BUT CITES THE POSSIBILITY THAT BUENOS AIRES IS SEEKING TO FORCE CHILEAN CONCESSIONS ON THE CANAL DISPUTE. HOFF NOTED THAT THE POLITICAL SIDE OF THE GERMAN EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES HAD NOT YET COMMENTED ON THE DEFENSE ATTACHE'S REPORT, THOUGH THE FOREIGN OFFICE WAS REQUESTING ITS VIEWS.

5. AS A PRECAUTION, THE FOREIGN OFFICE TOLD THE DEPARTING ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR (DURING HIS FARWELL CALL LAST WEEK) THAT THE FRG WAS CONCERNED ABOUT REPORTS OF INCREASED TENSION ON THE BORDER WITH CHILE. THE ENVOY WAS TOLD THAT A WORSENING OF THE SITUATION COULD RESULT IN ARGENTINA BEING DECLARED AN "AREA CONFIDENTIAL

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OF TENSION" AND THUS INELIGIBLE FOR FRG ARMS AID.

6. HOFF SAID THE FOREIGN OFFICE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
MEEHAN UNQTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, TROOP DEPLOYMENT, BORDER CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE230342
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ARA/RPP:COL SMQUIGG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780382-0150
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780976/aaaackvd.tel
Line Count: 100
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0ccb5b52-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1466001
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORT OF ARGENTINIEN TROOP MOVEMENTS ON CHILEAN BORDER
TAGS: PEPR, MPOL, PBOR, GE, CI, AR
To: BUENOS AIRES
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0ccb5b52-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014